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UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

BEFORE THE BOARD OF PATENT APPEALS
AND INTERFERENCES

Ex parte ROBERT E. JOHNSON and PAULENE PURDY

Appeal 2009-004412
Application 09/845,839
Technology Center 2100

Before JAMES D. THOMAS, THU A. DANG, and CAROLYN D.
THOMAS, *Administrative Patent Judges.*

DANG, *Administrative Patent Judge.*

DECISION ON APPEAL¹

¹ The two-month time period for filing an appeal or commencing a civil action, as recited in 37 C.F.R. § 1.304, or for filing a request for rehearing, as recited in 37 C.F.R. § 41.52, begins to run from the “MAIL DATE” (paper delivery mode) or the “NOTIFICATION DATE” (electronic delivery mode) shown on the PTOL-90A cover letter attached to this decision.

I. STATEMENT OF THE CASE

Appellants appeal from the Examiner's final rejection of claims 1-30 under 35 U.S.C. § 134(a) (2002). We have jurisdiction under 35 U.S.C. § 6(b).

We reverse.

A. INVENTION

According to Appellants, the invention relates to storage devices, and in one aspect to a system and method for validation of storage device addresses (Spec. 1).

B. ILLUSTRATIVE CLAIM

Claim 1 is exemplary and is reproduced below:

1. A method comprising:

storing discovery information relating to a storage device;

querying said storage device for device identification information; and

comparing at least a portion of returned device identification information to at least a portion of said stored discovery information.

C. REJECTIONS

The prior art relied upon by the Examiner in rejecting the claims on appeal is:

Blumenau US 6,263,445 B1 Jul. 17, 2001

Claims 1-30 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by Blumenau.

II. ISSUE

Has the Examiner erred in holding that Blumenau teaches “querying said storage device for device identification information” and “comparing at least a portion of returned device identification information to at least a portion of said stored discovery information” (claim 1)? In particular, the issue turns on whether Blumenau teaches querying the storage device for information to be compared to at least a portion of stored information.

III. FINDINGS OF FACT

The following Findings of Fact (FF) are shown by a preponderance of the evidence.

Blumenau

1. Blumenau discloses a shared resource that selectively services requests from devices (host processors, file servers and the like) for portions of data at the shared resource in response to configuration data associated with each of the portions, wherein the configuration data identifies which volume of data are available for access by each of the devices (col. 3, ll. 12-24).
2. Values of data at the storage system are configured according to the identity of the host devices coupled to the storage system, wherein the configuration data used to manage the allocation of volumes to

- different hosts is provided by a system administrator of the network and as a new host device enters the network, the system administrator allocates storage systems volume to the host (col. 9, ll. 42-52).
3. As each device enters the network, it queries the network to identify the other devices coupled to the network, wherein each device that responds to the query returns one or more identifiers for the device (col. 4, ll. 62-67).
 4. Configuration data in a transient filter table is accessed for each request, wherein the address is compared with an entry in the transient filer table (col. 8, ll. 9-17).
 5. In one embodiment, to support authentication of host requests, the storage system issues a number of unique, expected identifiers to each host bus adapter (HBA) of each host device and the storage system maintains a copy of the identifier, wherein when the HBA initiates a series of transactions, it forwards the expected identifiers that were received from the storage system back to the storage system and the storage system compares each received identifier against the expected identifier (col. 9, ll. 26-39).

IV. ANALYSIS

Appellants argue that “while[] *Blumenau* may disclose querying its host processors, file servers, etc. for identification information, it does not disclose querying a storage device for identification information, as recited in claim 1” (App. Br. 12). Further, Appellants argue that “while *Blumenau* may disclose comparing a host processor’s identification information with information stored in a table, it does not teach comparing returned storage

device identification information with stored discovery information relating to the storage device” (App. Br. 13).

The Examiner finds that Blumenau does disclose querying a storage device for identification information because “giving the broadest reasonable interpretation a storage device is a component something used to perform a storage task, thus the storage system of Blumenau is a storage device” (Ans. 16-17). However, after reviewing the record on appeal, we agree with the Appellants that the portions of Blumenau cited by the Examiner fail to disclose “querying said storage device for device identification information”, as required by claim 1. That is, according to the portions cited by the Examiner, Blumenau discloses a shared resource (storage system) that selectively services requests from devices such as host processors, file servers and the like (FF 1), wherein values of data at the storage system are configured according to the identify of the host device (FF 2). As each device enters the network, it queries the network to identify the other devices coupled to the network and each device that responds to the query returns one or more identifiers for the device (FF 3).

Though we agree with the Examiner that the storage system of Blumenau may be a storage device, we find that, in the portions of Blumenau cited by the Examiner, the storage system is not queried for identification. Instead, the values of data at the storage devices are configured according to the identify of the host devices, and the network is queried to identify the other devices.

Furthermore, Blumenau discloses configuration data in a transient filter table that is accessed for each request and the address is compared with

an entry in the transient filer table (FF 4). We agree with Appellants' argument that "while *Blumenau* may disclose comparing a host processor's identification information with information stored in a table, it does not teach comparing returned storage device identification information with stored discovery information relating to the storage device" (App. Br. 13). That is, in the portion of *Blumenau* cited by the Examiner, the other devices coupled to the network are identified, but there is no comparison of such identification with stored information relating to the storage device.

We note that, given the claims the broadest reasonable interpretation consistent with the specification, Appellants' claimed invention is merely directed to an authentication method, wherein the claims merely require storing information related to a device, querying said device for identification, and comparing the retrieved identification to the stored information to authenticate. We also note that *Blumenau* discloses a method to support authentication of host requests, wherein the storage system stores identifiers (FF 5). The storage system provides an identifier to an HBA when queried, wherein, when the HBA initiates a series of transactions, it sends the identifier to the storage system and the storage system compares each received identifier against the stored expected identifier (*id.*).

Though we note that *Blumenau* discloses an authentication method, we do not find any reference to such authentication method in the sections referenced by the Examiner. As such, we agree with Appellants that the Examiner erred in finding that the portions cited by the Examiner teach the claimed limitations. Accordingly, we will reverse the rejection of representative claim 1, independent claim 29 standing therewith, and 2-28 and 30 depending respectively therefrom.

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V. CONCLUSION

Appellants have shown that the Examiner erred in holding claims 1-30 unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e).

VI. DECISION

We have not sustained the Examiner's rejection with respect to any claim on appeal. Therefore, the Examiner's decision rejecting claims 1-30 is reversed.

REVERSED

peb

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